

## ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD 2022-2023

### INTRODUCTION

As the main acting body representing the member organisations of ILGA-Europe, the Executive Board provides overall direction to ILGA-Europe. The Executive Board acts and makes decisions in line with ILGA-Europe's vision, mission and values and within the framework of its constitution and policies laid down by the European and Central-Asia Regional conference between conferences, in particular in line with the strategic framework agreed by members.

In accordance with article E.5.d of the Constitution, the Executive Board of 2022-2023 herewith presents a report on its activities from October 2022 till October 2023 to the European and Central-Asian Regional Conference.

The report was prepared by the ILGA-Europe Executive Board co-secretaries - Penny Smith and Mamikon Hovsepyan (October 2023).

### BOARD SET-UP AND FUNCTIONING

At the 2022 October General Meeting, 5 Board members were elected. Natia Gvianishvili, Ivan Dimov and Yves Aerts were re-elected, Xheni Karaj and Zhanar Sekerbayeva were elected for their first mandates on the Executive Board. Together with the existing five members (Emina Bošnjak, Mamikon Hovsepyan, Soudeh Rad, Penny Smith, Tommy Petersen), the composition of the new Board was set for the new mandate and a division of positions followed as presented in a table below.

Throughout the year, the board diligently revised the governance manual to ensure its alignment with the standing orders. Additionally, the board formally incorporated online meetings as an integral component of its official board meetings.

Throughout the year, the Executive Board had **4 official Executive Board meetings and 7 online monthly calls** since the 2022 October General Meeting (in the fifth and sixth column below, the number of attendances to meetings per member). The board has three sub-committees – governance, finance and employment.

### ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

During the 2022 October General meeting the board proposal for a resolution of the general meeting on "Mandating the Executive Board of ILGA-Europe to co-opt Advisory Members to the Executive Board" was approved and it was agreed to change the Standing Orders to allow for Advisory Board Members to be co-opted to the Board for specific tasks. This year with two big processes to navigate

(an update to the strategy framework and the appointment of a new executive director) it was felt that the Board could make use of some specialised help. The board reached out to Micah Grzywnowicz and Masen Davis and they both agreed to join the team and were approved as the advisory board members. In accordance with the Standing Orders, Advisory Board members cannot vote on Board decisions but are there purely to advise and participate in discussions. The Board found their input invaluable especially with the new Executive Director recruitment process and with the strategic framework pathways.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS HAVE BEEN ORGANISED ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:**

- 2022 December 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> - Brussels
- 2023 March 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> - Brussels
- 2023 June 4<sup>th</sup> - Brussels
- 2023 September 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> – Brussels

**MONTHLY BOARD CALLS TOOK PLACE ONLINE ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:**

The Board calls have taken place on the following dates: 2022 November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 August 16<sup>th</sup>.

**REPORT ON GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

NAME	POSITION	TERM	TERM SERVED	CURRENT MANDATE ATTENDANCE	MONTHLY CALLS
Natia Gvianishvili (female)	Co-Chair	2022 - 2024	First	3	7
Yves Aerts (non-binary male)	Co-Chair	2022 - 2024	Third	4	6
Mamikon Hovsepyan (male)	Co-Secretary	2021 -2023	First	4	7

Penny Smith (female)	Co-Secretary	2021-2023	First	4	5
Ivan Dimov (male)	Treasurer	2022 - 2024	Second	4	4
Emina Bosnjak (female)	Member	2021 – 2023	Second	4	4
Soudeh Rad (non-binary person)	Member	2021 - 2023	Third	4	6
Tommy Petersen (male)	Member	2021-2023	First	4	6
Xheni Karaj (female)	Member	2022 - 2024	First	3	2
Zhanar Sekerbayeva (female)	Member	2022 - 2024	First	4	5

## REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

NAME	POSITION	STARTING YEAR	TERM SERVED	CURRENT MANDATE ATTENDANCE	MONTHLY CALLS
Micah Grzywnowicz	Advisory Member	2023	First	3	4
Masen Davis	Advisory Member	2023	First	3	3

## INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE BOARD

At the board meeting held in Brussels in December 2022, the Board approved the co-chairs, co-secretaries, treasurer and composition of the sub-committees. The following changes took place:

- Treasurer: Ivan Dimov
- Co-Chairs: Natia Gvianishvili (ED Line Manager), Yves Aerts
- Co-Secretaries: Mamikon Hovsepyan, Penny Smith

In the past year, the Executive Board organised its work in the following sub-committees covering different areas of responsibilities and working groups on issues that required further development in the work of ILGA-Europe. As many meetings were held online, Executive Board members had the opportunity to participate in more than two sub-committees. For this reason, the Executive Board members listed for the three sub-committees, represent the core group for each sub-committee, while the meetings themselves as well as different relevant processes, varied and, in the case of the finance sub-committee were broader.

NAME	MEMBERS
Finance sub-committee	Ivan Dimov, Emina Bošnjak, Penny Smith, Yves Aerts, Natia Gvianishvili (reserve)
Employment sub-committee	Natia Gvianishvili, Penny Smith, Tommy Petersen, Emina Bošnjak, Soudeh Rad
Governance sub-committee	Mamikon Hovsepyan, Xheni Karaj, Zhanar Sekerbayeva, Soudeh Rad, Yves Aerts, Natia Gvianishvili (reserve)

## OVERALL DIRECTION AND PRIORITIES

After establishing the new board, the team familiarized themselves with ILGA-Europe's key priorities, with a particular emphasis on advocacy, policy, and communications, as well as program objectives and fundraising strategies. The year was marked by significant developments within the organisation. On one hand, ILGA-Europe was in the process of crafting new strategic pathways for the next five years. On the other hand, it was announced that Evelyne Paradis, the Executive Director, would be departing from the organisation.

## THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT

Earlier this year, the Board undertook a significant responsibility with a mix of emotions as we set out to appoint a new Executive Director for ILGA-Europe. The announcement of Evelyne Paradis's impending departure later in the year filled us with sadness, tempered by deep gratitude for her exceptional wisdom and leadership over the past 18 years. It became evident that this decision was

made after careful consideration, and we sought Evelyne's guidance, where appropriate, throughout the transition process.

We promptly embarked on the task of formulating a comprehensive recruitment plan and assembled a Selection Committee consisting of four Board Members (Natia Gvianishvili, Yves Aerts, Soudeh Rad, Penny Smith) and two Advisory Board Members (Micah Grzywnowicz, Masen Davis). Drawing from our previous experiences in recruiting senior roles, we decided to engage the services of an external recruitment agency Perrett Laver, a decision validated by the Board Members during the meeting with the agency. Subsequently, a provisional timeline was established. The Selection Committee collaborated closely with Evelyne Paradis and the recruitment agency to craft a precise role description.

The agency initiated the search for potential candidates, both through a public call and direct outreach to individuals they deemed suitable. The response exceeded our expectations, with over 50 applicants expressing their interest in the position. After thorough deliberation and careful consideration, we identified four exceptional candidates to proceed to the first round of interviews in early July. We were gratified by the remarkable interest displayed by all of these candidates during their interviews. In late July, we conducted in-person interviews in Brussels for the final two candidates. Prior to these interviews, we had tasked them with assignments to showcase their skills and knowledge. Additionally, a full day of interviews was scheduled. Subsequently, the Selection Committee, followed by the entire Board, dedicated substantial time to deliberate and evaluate the candidates. It is with immense pleasure and confidence that we announce A. Chaber's acceptance of the position. We believe that Chaber will lead ILGA-Europe with effectiveness and unwavering diligence, securing the organisation's prominent role on the European and Central Asian stage.

## **THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

In 2023, we found ourselves at the conclusion of the existing framework, prompting a crucial need for an update to ensure its relevance and effectiveness for the next five years. Our specific focus was directed toward the enhancement of our initiatives related to social inclusion and social acceptance.

As an organization firmly rooted in membership-driven principles, we deeply appreciate the insights and contributions of our members at every stage of this pivotal process. We actively sought the input, recognizing its immense value in shaping our direction. In pursuit of this collective vision, we convened an in-person event in June, where we were honored to have representatives from over 30 member organisations engage in substantive discussions on topics related to social inclusion and social acceptance.

The ultimate iteration of the framework, reflecting our shared aspirations, will be presented for consensus at the upcoming General Meeting during the Annual Conference. This milestone represents a significant step in our ongoing commitment to progress and responsiveness to the needs and aspirations of our membership.

## WORK ON ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE

Most of the work around governance in the reporting cycle revolved around the Strategic Framework and the Leadership transition. However, some other policies have been discussed and approved during the year.

### **Policy on “Participation in National/European Elections”**

In the event that individuals run for government at a level with which ILGA-Europe works with, it is imperative that both staff members and members of the Board, including Advisory Board Members, declare their intention to run for office and subsequently take a temporary leave of absence for the duration of the election campaign. And if any of our members are successfully elected to their respective government positions, they are required to submit their resignation from their roles within the organization.

This policy serves to ensure transparency, prevent conflicts of interest, and uphold the integrity of both our organisation and the electoral process.

### **“Right to Disconnect” Policy**

The policy aims to empower the staff with the opportunity to enjoy well-deserved downtime beyond their regular working hours. We recognize that while our work environment is supportive, the nature of our field often extends beyond standard office hours. Consequently, access hours are collaboratively determined by line managers to ensure both flexibility and productivity.

This comprehensive policy explicitly defines what the 'Right to Disconnect' entails, encompassing various aspects of disconnecting from work-related obligations, including exceptional considerations for emergency situations. To further support our staff, we have introduced a dedicated chapter in the staff manual that offers practical examples and guidance on how to effectively implement this policy. Our primary objective is to encourage all staff members to prioritize and safeguard their personal time and well-being.

It's important to note that this policy applies to all staff, with the exception of management roles, in alignment with our commitment to fostering a healthy work-life balance across our organization.

### **“Structural Teleworking” Policy**

In order to accommodate the diverse needs of staff members and remain a structured but flexible workplace, it was proposed for the Executive Board to review the Structural Teleworking Policy. The aim of the policy is to establish a framework for the employees to carry out work using approved information and communication technologies usually restricted to the ILGA-Europe office, either at home or at any other location by mutual agreement and on a pre-planned basis. The policy covers the areas of frequency, location, equipment, remuneration and expenses, rights and obligations, accidents at work, as well as cessation of structural teleworking.

All employees of the organisation have the possibility to participate in structural teleworking with the condition that their role is compatible with structural teleworking. The use of structural teleworking requires the prior mutual agreement of the employer and the employees.

The two policies are needed to accommodate the diversity of needs that the 22 employees present (including having families in other countries), but also represent a written form of the practices and procedures that have developed during the pandemic. While still maintaining that the main point of operations is the ILGA-Europe office in Brussels, these policies give required flexibility to the staff. The policies are in line with the staff Handbook. Homeworking health and safety is taken seriously, and the correct equipment is provided as well as relevant aspects of digital security.

## STAFF AFFAIRS

As reported to the Executive Board by the Executive Director, the situation in the team remained stable throughout the reporting period, with some growth that was allowed by the financial stability and extensive work that is being done by the staff team.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Based on the research and recommendations provided by the staff, the board has made the choice to host the conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The conference theme is “Rising to the Moment”. ILGA-Europe has signed a contract with the venue for up to 450 participants, and with accommodation provided in three hotels owned by the venue – two of them on location, and one approx. 5 minutes away. For the time being, it was also decided to continue having a cap of 2 representatives per organisation present physically at the Conference, while the General Meeting will continue to be conducted in a hybrid format. This decision was driven by the experience of the ILGA-Europe team as well as extensive feedback from participants in prior conferences. The goal is to ensure a more targeted and cohesive participation, allowing for better networking and more meaningful participation in relevant discussions. The participants of the Annual Conference in Sofia in 2022 indicated that this goal was successfully met by the organisation, due to a smaller size of the participants. The Executive Board, together with the staff team will continue to work on feedback from the member organisations and possible other solutions on the matter.

## REPRESENTATION

Throughout the reporting cycle, several Executive Board members had an opportunity to represent ILGA-Europe at events that were prioritised by the organisation.

On April 27th, the treasurer of ILGA-Europe Executive Board, Ivan Dimov represented the organisation as a jury member for the European Capitals of Inclusion & Diversity award.

On September 30th, the co-chair of ILGA-Europe Executive Board, Natia Gvianishvili represented ILGA-Europe at the International Bi+ Forum organised in Malmö, Sweden, by one of ILGA-Europe's current grantee-partners - RFSL Malmö.